



PLATYCERCUS ADELAIDÆ: Gould.

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Adelaide Parrakeet.

Platycercus Adelaidiæ, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part VIII. p. 163.
Pheasant Parrot, Colonists of South Australia.

THIS beautiful *Platycercus* is a native of South Australia, and from the circumstance of my having procured some of my finest specimens in the very streets of that embryo city, I have been induced to give it the specific name of *Adelaidiæ*. In all probability the bird may in a few years be looked for in vain in the suburbs of this rapidly increasing settlement, as it is too large a species and possesses too many attractions to remain unmolested; indeed it is even now much persecuted and destroyed by the newly-arrived emigrants, who kill it either for mere sport or for the table; for, like the other *Platycerci*, all of which feed on grass-seeds, it is excellent eating.

The *Platycercus Adelaidiæ* at first caused me considerable perplexity from its close similarity in some stages of its plumage to the *P. Pennantii*; as in that species the plumage of the young for the first season is wholly green, which colouring gradually gives place to red on the head, rump, and upper surface, the scapularies and back feathers being margined with the same hue, a character of plumage which soon disappears and gives place to dull yellow on the flanks and olive-yellow on the upper surface, the scapularies and back feathers in the mature dress being edged with yellowish buff and violet. It was only by killing at least a hundred examples in all their various stages of plumage, from the nestling to the adult, that I was enabled to determine the fact of its being a new and distinct species. In all its dimensions it is less than the Pennantian.

I found the present species plentiful on the banks of the river Torrens, throughout its whole course, as well as over all the low grassy hills between that river and the Murray. It was in winter that I visited this portion of Australia, when I found the adults associated in small groups of from six to twenty in number; while near the coast, between Holdfast Bay and the Port of Adelaide, the young in the green dress were assembled in flocks of hundreds; they were generally on the ground in search of grass-seeds, and when so occupied would admit of a near approach: when flushed they merely flew up to the branches of the nearest tree: it is impossible to conceive anything more beautiful than the rising of a flock of adults, spreading out their beautiful broad blue tails and wings, which glittering in the sun present a really magnificent spectacle.

The note is a loud, piping whistle.

The fully adult male has the crown of the head, lores, sides of the neck, breast and centre of the abdomen scarlet, passing into dull yellow on the flanks; cheeks and wing-coverts light lazuline blue; primaries deep blue, passing into black at the extremity; back of the neck dull yellow; back black, each feather margined with yellowish buff, some of the marginations tinged with blue, others with scarlet; rump and upper tail-coverts dull greenish yellow, the latter sometimes tinged with scarlet; two centre tail-feathers greenish blue; the remainder deep blue at the base, gradually becoming lighter until almost white at the tip; irides brown; bill horn-colour; feet greyish brown.

The figures are those of an adult and an immature bird, in course of change from the green plumage to that adult dress of the natural size.